

Introduction

The public services and facilities element of a master plan tries to anticipate the buildings, other facilities, and human resources that a local government will need in order to meet future demands for services. A public facility is any town-owned property designated for public use or providing a base of operations for municipal services. In addition to buildings, this includes, but is not limited to, roadways, utilities such as water or sewer service, parks, playgrounds, and cemeteries.

Common public facilities include town halls, fire and police stations, and public schools. In addition to these “basic” public buildings, many communities have unique facilities such as town hospitals, an airport, or a function hall and grounds. For example, Arlington owns several historic buildings and former schools that currently house municipal programs and private offices. Together, a town’s buildings, land, infrastructure, and equipment make it possible for municipal employees and volunteers to provide services to residents and businesses. Public facilities are often located in strategic locations. Siting emergency departments in centrally located and accessible areas should benefit the greatest number of residents. Arlington’s Central Fire Station is a good example of a strategically located facility at the confluence of multiple street grids which enable quick access in an emergency.

The Town of Arlington is a large, complex corporation with an annual operating budget of \$132 million (FY 2014). Its financial strength is due largely to the implementation of a five-year strategic financial plan. Credit rating agencies have recognized Arlington as an exceptionally well-run town and it ranks among an elite group of Massachusetts communities with a triple-A bond rating. Arlington adopted the Community Preservation Act in 2014 to augment financial resources for affordable housing, historic preservation, open space and recreation.

It is a “full-service” community, offering many programs and services for people of all ages. Overall, residents seem satisfied with the quality of the services they receive. Participants in public meetings for this master plan usually gave high marks to town government in general and the



master plan goals for public facilities & services

- Coordinate and efficiently deliver town services.
- Build, operate, and maintain public facilities that are attractive and help to minimize environmental impact and that connect Arlington as a community.
- Balance the need for additional revenue with ability and willingness of property owners to pay to maintain current services or for new expenditures and investments
- Guide public facility investments through a long-term capital planning process that anticipates future needs.

schools in particular, and many say Arlington’s historic civic buildings are among the great strengths of the community. Design can embody the values of the community. Arlington’s Town Hall, Robbins Library, and the gardens that connect them are more than just a reflection of the community when they were built; they represent Arlington’s cultural identity.

The educational, cultural, recreational, and health services that Arlington provides enhance the quality of life in town, but they are increasingly expensive to maintain. Complaints about property taxes are hardly

unique to Arlington, but the frequency with which people mention “structural deficit” in Arlington suggests a heightened awareness about the imbalance between a major dependence on the local tax base and high expectations for services. Arlington is a largely built-out community. It benefits from the efficiencies that come with a fairly compact development pattern, yet it still faces a constant challenge of funding local government services. There are several reasons for these challenges, ranging from Arlington’s lack of land for new growth to its small nonresidential tax base. The aging of the population, the impact of economic cycles on municipal revenue growth, the unpredictability of state aid, constitutional constraints on the taxation powers of Massachusetts cities and towns, and the cost to operate high quality services mean that Arlington’s financial challenges will probably intensify in the future.

Existing Conditions

Town Services

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

“General government” includes the Town’s executive, financial, legal, administrative, policy, and planning functions. Arlington has a **Town Manager/Board of Selectmen** form of government with a legislative body composed of 252 elected **Town Meeting** members. The Town Manager, a professional appointed by the selectmen, directs the day-to-day operations of local government and acts as the chief executive officer. In addition, the Town Manager prepares a proposed annual operating budget and capital budget and submits them to the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee, which reviews all spending requests and makes recommendations to Town Meeting. The Board of Selectmen issues warrants for Town Meeting, makes recommendations on some warrant articles, sets town policies, and adopts financial guidelines for the annual operating budget and capital improvements. In addition, the selectmen approve the Town Manager’s appointments to boards and commissions, hold public hearings, oversee traffic issues, and issue various licenses, including liquor and food vendor licenses.

In 1986, Arlington established a Capital Planning Committee (CPC) to help the town plan for and prioritize capital expenses. The CPC includes the Town Manager, Superintendent of Schools, Treasurer, and Comptroller (or their designees), along with a representative of the Finance Committee and four registered voters. As a matter of policy, Arlington dedicates approximately

5 percent of town revenue for capital items annually, including debt service from projects approved in prior years. The CPC uses the following criteria to evaluate capital requests from town departments:

- Imminent threat to the health and safety of citizens/property
- Maintenance of operations/necessary expenditure
- Requirement of state or federal law/regulation
- Improvement of infrastructure
- Improvement of productivity
- Alleviation of over-taxed/over-burdened population

The CPC develops a five-year capital plan and submits recommendations to the Town Manager for inclusion with the operating budget. Over the five-year period FY 2014-2018, Arlington’s capital plan calls for a total investment of \$47 million from a combination of debt, cash outlays from general revenue, and other sources such as user fees and grants.¹

The Board of Selectmen and Town Manager develop annual goals. Both have embraced goals of transparency, public information, and customer service. Toward these ends, Arlington has established an online Request/Answer Center to make, track, and search requests for town services. The service has been heavily used by both staff and residents. In addition, there is a town email distribution list for official notices, information on town activities, and public alerts. According to the 2012 Annual Report, subscription has increased to more than 4,500 individuals. Arlington residents take participation seriously, and they expect timely access to information. In Vision 2020 surveys, many respondents have said they rely on the town website and public alerts to stay on top of town and school issues.²

Several departments comprise the general government operations at Arlington Town Hall (Table 9.1). In addition to the Town Manager and Board of Selectmen, Arlington has the core functions of Town Clerk, Comptroller, Treasurer/Collector, and Assessors as well as the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD). General

¹ Adam Chapdelaine, Town Manager, *FY 2014 Annual Budget and Financial Plan*, 177-198 passim; and interview, September 25, 2013.

² *Vision 2020 Annual Report to Town Meeting* (May 6, 2013), 4.

Table 9.1. General Government FTE Staff (FY 2014)				
Position	Board of Selectmen	Town Manager	Human Resources	Finance
Managerial	1	2.0	1.0	2.0
Clerical	2.5	1.0	2.5	11.2
Professional/Technical	0	2.7	0.0	3.0
Custodial	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	3.5	5.7	3.5	16.2
Position	Assessor	Information Technology	Legal	Town Clerk/Registrars
Managerial	1.0	1.0	2.0	1.0
Clerical	3.0	1.0	1.5	3.0
Professional/Technical	0.0	5.5	1.0	1.0
Custodial	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	4.0	7.5	4.5	5.0
Position	Parking	Planning & Community Development	Redevelopment Board	Zoning Board of Appeals
Managerial	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0
Clerical	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.5
Professional/Technical	0.0	3.8	0.0	0.0
Custodial	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0
Total	1.0	5.8	0.5	0.5
Grand Total				57.7
Source: Town of Arlington, FY2014 Budget				

government functions in Arlington have a combined total of 57.7 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees, or approximately 1.3 general government employees per 1,000 population.³

Most departments provide support to elected and appointed boards, notably DPCD, which works with many volunteer entities: the **Redevelopment Board**, **Board of Appeals**, **Historic District Commissions**, **Conservation Commission**, **Vision 2020**, **Open Space Committee**, **Master Plan Advisory Committee**, and others. Arlington has over 50 civic volunteer organizations and bodies that carry out formal local government actions, influence budgeting and borrowing, grant permits, help form policy, and augment the stewardship of Town properties. These volunteers are essential to civic life and local government in Arlington.

Many of Arlington's general government functions are housed in the Town Hall and annex at the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Academy Street in Arlington Center. The 100-year-old building includes administrative offices, meeting rooms, and a beautifully restored auditorium used

for town meetings and other community events. Town Hall is partially accessible to people with disabilities

Public Safety

POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Arlington Police Department has the largest staff of all Town departments (excluding schools). Organized into three divisions, the police department has a total of 83.7 FTE employees or 1.95 FTE per 1,000 population (Table 9.2). Staffing for the traffic and patrol functions in the Community Services Division and the Criminal Investigation Bureau (CIB) have been reduced from historic levels but have remained constant for the last few years. In the past, administration and support for the fire and police departments were accounted for separately in the Community Safety Administration & Support Budget. As of FY 2014, these functions have been integrated within the police and fire department budgets, but the support staff levels will remain the same. The public safety dispatchers now fall within the police department's purview as well.

The **Community Services Division** includes all uniformed patrol operations: the Traffic Unit, Patrol Division, Community Services Officer, K-9 Unit, Bicycle Unit, and Animal Control. Officers answer calls, enforce traffic and park-

³ FY 2014 Annual Budget and Financial Plan, 61-101 passim.

ing laws, and perform special assignments such as school safety. The Crime Analysis Unit tracks trends and patterns and uses the information to direct police resources.

The **Investigative Services and Professional Standards Division** administers the Criminal Investigation Bureau (CIB) and Professional Standards/Accreditation Office. The CIB has responsibility for crime follow-up, maintaining the sex offender registry, police prosecutions in court, the school resource officer, drug task force, family services, and code enforcement. This division also develops and implements department policies and procedures, maintains state accreditation and certification, and conducts internal and special investigations.

The **Support Services Division** provides logistical support to all police units and carries out administrative functions. The division's responsibilities include recruiting, hiring, and training new officers; managing information systems; issuing firearm and hackney licenses; scheduling; maintaining the fleet and building; recordkeeping; and dispatch.

The Police Department receives grants for special programs, e.g., the Hoarding Response Team (a joint effort with the Fire and Health Departments) and the Jail Diversion Program. Both efforts pair a mental health clinician with public safety officials to help residents with mental health problems.

Arlington belongs to the North Eastern Massachusetts Law Enforcement Council (NEMLEC), which provides mutual aid and has an assistance agreement to share resources and personnel among member communities.

Calls for Service. Between 2009 and 2012, the Arlington Police Department's calls for service increased steadily (Table 9.3). According to the 2012 Annual Report, the Police Department responded to more than 30,000 emergency calls that year. However, arrests decreased, as did reported "Part A" crimes: murder, manslaughter, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, arson, and motor vehicle theft. In Arlington, burglaries are the most common Part A crime. In 2012, a total of 582 crimes were reported to the Police Department, representing a 15 percent decrease from 2011. Traffic problems generate many of the public safety complaints. The Traffic Unit is considered understaffed, with only one full-time officer assigned to it. With

Position	Total Staff
Chief	1
Captain	3
Lieutenant	6
Sergeants	9
Police Officers	47
Parking Control Officers	2.4
Animal Control Officer	1
Dispatchers	10
Clerical	4.3
Custodial	1
Total	83.7
Source: Town of Arlington, FY2014 Budget	

	2009	2010	2011	2012
Emergency Calls	25,268	26,732	27,483	30,168
Police Reports	3,510	3,810	3,638	3,488
Arrests	309	293	226	209
Protective Custody	35	22	15	35
Summons	205	181	192	183
M.V. Citations	3,369	3,567	4,049	3,914
Source: Arlington Police Department, 2012 Annual Report				

increasing investigative and administrative functions, the Traffic Unit's productivity has decreased.⁴

Facilities. The Police Department operates from Arlington's Community Safety Building on the corner of Mystic and Summer Streets. Built in 1983, it is currently in the second phase of a three-phase renovation. Phase 1 involved rebuilding the central courtyard. In Phase 2, the building envelope—damaged by chronic water infiltration—is being reconstructed. Phase 3 will focus on interior renovations and programmatic improvements to support police operations. This last phase, budgeted at \$2.5 million, is currently planned for FY 2015 and FY 2016.⁵

FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Arlington Fire Department's responsibilities include fire prevention and suppression, hazard mitigation, planning for local emergencies, and emergency medical service. Fire prevention includes code enforcement and inspections as well as public education efforts, e.g., Student Awareness of Fire Education (SAFE) and the Juvenile Fire

⁴ Arlington Police Department, 2012 Annual Report.

⁵ Arlington Capital Planning Committee, Report to Town Meeting, April 2013.

Setter Intervention Program (JFIP). All Arlington firefighters are trained in emergency medical techniques, and all newly hired firefighters are required to become emergency medical technicians (EMTs). There is one Town-owned ambulance with one backup. Arlington continues to explore expanding its emergency medical service to include advanced life support (ALS) and a second full-time ambulance. Currently, the privately-owned Armstrong Ambulance Service provides the paramedics for all ALS calls. Armstrong, which provides services to many communities in Greater Boston, is physically based and headquartered in Arlington.

The Fire Department employs eighty people, most with combined firefighter/EMT responsibilities (Table 9.4), providing a ratio of 1.87 FTE per 1,000 population. In 2012, the Fire Department had 73 EMTs on staff and three first responders. According to the 2012 Annual Report and the Town's FY 2014 Budget and Financial Plan, the Fire Department's capacity has been strained by increasing demands, particularly for training, prevention, and inspections. In 2014, the Fire Department expects to create a five-to ten-year plan that will likely involve reorganization of functions and personnel.

Calls for Service. The Arlington Fire Department responded to 4,752 calls for service in 2012, including 133 fires. Over half the calls were for medical emergencies or medical assists. The overall call volume has remained relatively constant for the past several years (Table 9.5).

Facilities and Equipment. Arlington has three fire stations that house a variety of apparatus (Table 9.6). The Fire Department Headquarters are located in the historic Central Fire Station, which is currently in the final phase of a complete renovation. Funding for the design of interior renovations is budgeted in Arlington's capital plan for FY2014, and construction is budgeted in FY2015 (estimated construction cost: \$5.6 million). The Highland Fire Station, renovated in 2011, is certified as LEED Silver⁶, and the third facility, the Tower Fire Station on Park Avenue in Arlington Heights, was built in 2007 to replace an earlier station at that site.

INSPECTIONAL SERVICES

The Inspectional Services Department (ISD) administers the State Building Code and enforces the Zoning Bylaw.

⁶ LEED Silver indicates a score of 50-59 out of 100 points on a scale that measures energy efficiency and environmental design.

Table 9.4. Fire Department Staff
(FY 2014)

Position	Total Staffing
Chief	1.0
Deputy Chief	5.0
Captain	6.0
Lieutenant	15.0
Firefighter	50.0
Professional/Technical	2.0
Clerical	1.0
Total	80.0

Source: Town of Arlington, FY 2014 Budget

Table 9.5. Fire Department Calls for Service: 2009-2012

	2009	2010	2011	2012
Fire	79	132	111	133
Emergency Medicals & Medical Assists	2,546	2,490	2,581	2,450
Other*	2,093	2,426	2,125	2,169
Total Calls	4,718	5,048	4,817	4,752

Source: Arlington Fire Department, 2012 Annual Report.

Table 9.6. Fire Apparatus

Station	Equipment
Central Fire Station	Engine 1 Engine 5 Ladder 1 4 cars 1 pick up 1 trailer 1 maintenance truck 1 boat
Highland Fire Station	Engine 2 Engine 4 Rescue 1 Rescue 2
Tower Fire Station (Park Circle)	Engine 3

Source: Northeast Fire News, 2013.

In addition to the ISD director, who serves as the Town's building commissioner, the department employs three other inspectors and a zoning assistant. In FY2012, the ISD issued a combined total of 5,760 building, plumbing, gas, and wiring permits. Like most building departments, Arlington's ISD generates significantly more revenue from permit fees than the Town's cost to operate the department. The 5,760 permits issued in 2012 brought over \$1.7 million to the Arlington's general fund compared with a total operating budget of \$378,190.⁷

⁷ FY2014 Annual Budget and Financial Plan, 137.



Public Works

The Arlington Department of Public Works (DPW) consists of seven divisions with a combined total of 77.3 FTE employees (Table 9.7), or just 1.8 FTE per 1,000 population – including those employed under the water/sewer enterprise. The average ratio of DPW employees in the U.S. Northeast region is 2.15 FTE. A decade ago (2004), the DPW was Arlington’s largest town department, but it has felt drastic effects of budget shortfalls, more than most other municipal operations. As in most towns, the DPW in Arlington is the “go-to” department for numerous requests, and it is a very busy operation. Public works departments everywhere tend to be capital-intensive operations, and the same applies to Arlington’s DPW. Virtually all of the projects the DPW is responsible for involve both workers and heavy equipment: dump trucks, tractors, backhoes, street sweepers, sanders, materials and equipment for water and sewer main repairs and improvements, plows, and so forth. Its \$24.2 million share of the 2012-2013 capital plan is one-half of the total that Arlington expects to spend on capital projects between FY 2014-2018.⁸

DPW Services. In addition to core DPW administrative functions, the DPW maintains just over 100 miles⁹ of

roadways and 175 miles of sidewalks; provides engineering services (e.g., design, construction oversight, development review); maintains all town parks and playgrounds and all trees on public property; manages building custodians; and maintains forty town buildings,¹⁰ cemeteries, the town’s 250 miles of water and sewer infrastructure, and over 150 town vehicles. The DPW also oversees the vendor contract for curbside solid waste disposal, composting, and recycling services. Although Arlington is not a “pay-as-you-throw” (PAYT) community, the DPW is particularly proud of Arlington’s accomplishments with solid waste and recycling. In 2012, for example, the Town reduced solid waste disposal from 14,527 to 12,603 tons in FY13 and increased recyclables from 4652 to 5258 tons.¹¹

Water/Sewer Enterprise. Arlington purchases water and sewer service from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) but maintains its own water and sewer infrastructure: 135 miles of water mains, 127 miles of sewer mains, nine sewer lift stations, and many hydrants, valves, and service connections/shut offs. The Town charges residents and businesses for water and sewer use and pays the MWRA approximately \$12 million per year. Arlington operates these services as a municipal enterprise, which means water and sewer revenues are accounted for separately from the General Fund. Since these services receive a

Table 9.7. Public Works Staff (FY 2014)

Position	Total Staffing
Administration	7.2
Engineering	4.0
Cemeteries	3.6
Natural Resources	18.0
Highways	22.0
Water/Sewer	16.5
Fleet Maintenance	6.0
Total	77.3
Source: Town of Arlington, FY 2014 Budget. Note: two DPW divisions - Properties and Streetlights – do not have employees.	

set level of subsidy (approximately \$5.6 million) from taxes, water and sewer rates must be set at levels that will cover the Town’s obligations to the MWRA and provide for reasonable operating and capital reserves.

⁸ FY 2014 Budget and Financial Plan, 191-194.

⁹ Of the total 120.80 miles of roadway in Arlington, DPW maintains 101.98 miles of public roadway. 4.52 miles are maintained by MassDOT, 1.52 miles by DCR, and 12.77 miles are private ways. Mass Dept. of Revenue: Municipal databank. Road Miles 2012.

¹⁰ Supervision of school building maintenance resides in the DPW, but the budget for building maintenance and all of the maintenance personnel are in the School Department.

¹¹ Public Works Department, 2012 Annual Report, and Michael Rademacher, DPW Director, interview, September 17, 2013.

	Sewer		Water				
	Average Sewer Cost	Population Served	Average Water Cost	Population Served	Average Annual Utility Cost (Combined)	Median Household Income	Utility Cost % Household Income
ARLINGTON	\$583	42,300	\$594	42,300	\$1,177	\$87,525	1.34%
Belmont	\$1,347	24,000	\$724	25,000	\$2,071	\$105,717	1.96%
Brookline	\$895	56,377	\$600	56,377	\$1,495	\$95,471	1.57%
Medford	\$912	57,407	\$637	57,407	\$1,549	\$72,773	2.13%
Melrose	\$1,069	28,100	\$690	28,100	\$1,759	\$86,264	2.04%
Milton	\$1,232	Not reported	\$656	26,220	\$1,888	\$107,577	1.76%
Natick	\$951	32,000	\$316	32,000	\$1,267	\$95,059	1.33%
Needham	\$998	30,000	\$483	30,000	\$1,481	\$125,170	1.18%
North Andover	\$846	18,000	\$526	29,456	\$1,372	\$97,044	1.41%
Reading	\$1,176	23,486	\$1,075	23,846	\$2,251	\$102,614	2.19%
Stoneham	\$1,080	23,000	\$552	23,000	\$1,632	\$72,938	2.24%
Watertown	\$913	32,986	\$479	30,237	\$1,392	\$83,053	1.68%
Winchester	\$313	22,275	\$276	22,275	\$589	\$128,199	0.46%
Midpoint	\$951		\$594		\$1,495		1.68%

Source: Tighe & Bond, 2012 Massachusetts Sewer Rate Survey and 2012 Massachusetts Water Rate Survey (undated).

Relative to its peer group, Arlington is fairly affordable in terms of water and sewer costs. An annual survey of water and sewer rates in Massachusetts indicates that Arlington's average sewer bill falls well below the peer group midpoint, and its average water bill is at the midpoint.¹² Together, water and sewer charges in Arlington comprise 1.3 percent of the town's median household income: one of the least burdensome costs shown in Table 9.8.

According to a study recently published by the Massachusetts Water Infrastructure Finance Commission (WIFC), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established a water and sewer affordability benchmark of 2 to 2.5 percent of median household income each for water and sewer service. However, the WIFC argues for a lower threshold: 1.25 percent each for water and sewer service.¹³ Arlington somewhat exceeds the WIFC affordability standard but falls well within that promoted by the EPA.

¹² As part of the annual budget presentation, the Town Manager's office tracks key financial data for twelve communities that are generally similar to Arlington. Together, Arlington and the other twelve make up the peer group referred to elsewhere in this plan.

¹³ Water Infrastructure Finance Commission, *Massachusetts's Water Infrastructure: Toward Financial Sustainability* (February 7, 2012), 99-100.

Health & Human Services

Arlington has a multi-purpose human services agency with programs supported both by tax revenue and user fees. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) includes the **Board of Health**, the **Council on Aging (COA)**, **COA Transportation**, **Veterans Services**, and the **Youth Counseling Center**. It also provides professional support to several town boards, notably the **Fair Housing Commission**, the **Disabilities Commission**, **Board of Health**, **Council on Aging**, **Human Rights Commission**, and **Board of Youth Services**. The department employs fourteen people (FTE) and provides services on a contractual basis as well (Table 9.9). In addition to these budgeted services, the HHS oversees a federally funded program known as the Arlington Youth Health and Safety Coalition, which employs three people.

HHS programs are scattered among several community facilities, though all are located in the town's civic center. The main administrative offices are at 27 Maple Street in the former Central School building, which also houses the COA and the Arlington Senior Center. The Central School was rehabilitated from a school building to a senior/community center and leased office space in 1984. The existing space available to the COA is inadequate to serve the 4,420 Arlington seniors who seek service annually, according to

correspondence from the COA Board of Directors.¹⁴ The COA is subject to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) privacy rules which are challenging for the COA to meet in shared workspaces. According to the town's Capital Planning Committee (CPC), the Central School is managed by the Arlington Redevelopment Board (ARB). The Youth Counseling Center occupies space in the Whittemore Robbins House, located behind the library. The Veterans Agent has an office at Town Hall.

Culture and Recreation

ARLINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Arlington's public library system is a vital asset to the community, serving as a cultural hub and providing free and equal access to traditional and technological resources for all Arlington residents. The main library, Robbins Library, is located in the heart of Arlington, on Massachusetts Avenue. Built in 1892, Robbins Library was designed in the Italian Renaissance style, modeled on a palace in Rome, and finished extravagantly with marble, gold leaf, and custom furniture and fixtures.¹⁵ It is on the National Register of Historic Places. Arlington also operates a branch library on Massachusetts Avenue in East Arlington, the Edith M. Fox Library, which was built in 1965 to replace the original East Branch library on Massachusetts Avenue. Since 1994, the Fox Library has also served as an active, multi-purpose community center.

Both libraries offer a variety of programming for children, teens, and adults. Examples of library programming include panels of local authors, summer reading program, teen book group, and story time. In addition, both facilities have public computer workstations, which are heavily used, and the library has a laptop lending service. Robbins Library also has display space for local organizations, special exhibits, study rooms, a local history room, and community rooms available for local group meetings. Rooms at the Robbins Library can be rented after hours for events. Arlington is part of the Minuteman Library Network of for-

Table 9.9. Health & Human Services Staff (FTE) (FY2014)					
				Municipal Enterprises	
Position	Board of Health	Veterans Agent	Council on Aging (COA)	COA Transportation	Youth Counseling Center
Managerial	1.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.0
Clerical	0.8	0.0	0.9	0.5	1.5
Professional/Technical	2.5	1.0	1.1	0.0	1.7
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0
Total	4.3	1.0	3.0	1.5	4.2
Source: Town of Arlington, FY 2014 Budget.					

ty-three public and academic libraries, offering residents access to combined holdings of over six million items.

Operations. The Town Manager oversees the library operations, and the Library Board of Trustees administers library trust funds. The seven board members are appointed by the Town Manager for terms between one and three years. In addition to public funding, the Friends of Robbins Library and Friends of the Fox Branch Library provide financial support for programs and extended hours. The Anne A. Russell Children's Educational and Cultural Enrichment Fund, established in the 1990s, supports children's services. Further, the Arlington Libraries Foundation was started in 2013 to attract private donations to support the library's goals.

Robbins Library is open Monday through Friday year-round, with Saturday hours in September through June and Sunday afternoon hours in October through April. The Fox Library is open Tuesday through Friday, with Friday hours funded by the Friends of the Fox.

The library budget provides for a total of 31.3 FTE positions, but the libraries employ approximately 20 part-time employees (Table 9.10). Due to budget cuts, staffing has decreased since 2003. The increasing demand for library services has led to growth in responsibilities for staff members. Implementing new technologies, such as the radio frequency identification (RFID) system for tracking and inventory, can help the library meet its growing demands with current staff levels.

Use. Arlington's libraries are heavily used. In FY2012, the libraries reported over 325,000 visits, a total circulation of 665,437, the highest in the library's history, and a 23 percent increase since 2002 (Table 9.11).¹⁶ The library also reported that circulation of electronic content, including

¹⁴ May 15, 2014 letter to Director of Planning and Community Development from the COA Board.

¹⁵ Arlington Public Libraries, History of the Library. See also, Part 7, Historic & Cultural Resource Areas.

¹⁶ Arlington Libraries, Department Report in Arlington's 2012 Annual Report.



Robbins Library.

Position	Total Staffing (FTE)
Managerial	1.0
Clerical	17.5
Professional/Technical	12.0
Custodial	0.8
Total	31.3
Source: Town of Arlington, FY 2014 Budget	

e-books, quadrupled between 2011 and 2012, to over 8,900. Circulation at the Fox Library has also increased significantly in recent years. The library director estimates that overdue fees and fines generate approximately \$40,000 annually, which goes to the Town's General Fund.¹⁷

Facilities. Robbins Library had a major renovation with a new addition, in 1992. Since then, the way residents use the library has changed, shifting the focus away from print materials to computer-based resources. The Library staff is currently developing a strategic plan that will include an observational study of how library patrons currently use the space. The study's results will influence future capital improvements for the facility. Robbins Library has also been proposed as a public cooling zone for the community during summer weekends, which would require additional funding to keep the library open for summer weekend hours.¹⁸ The Fox Branch Library, which has not had a major renovation since 1969, also has capital needs. Both library buildings are managed by DPW.

¹⁷ Ryan Livergood (Library Director), Department Survey, October 2013.

¹⁸ Ibid.

	FY2011	FY2012
Circulation of materials	641,994	665,437
Electronic Content circulation	2,213	8,902
Children's programs	331	460
Adult and young adult programs	85	119
Visits to Robbins Library	321,898	325,550
Uses of Meeting Rooms	997	1,053
Source: Arlington Libraries, Department Report in Arlington's 2012 Annual Report.		

RECREATION

The Arlington Recreation Department is responsible for managing town recreation facilities: scheduling, developing and providing programs, collecting user fees, and so forth, and provides staff support to the Park and Recreation Commission (Table 9.12). The department consists of two divisions: recreation, and the Ed Burns Arena/Sports Center. Arlington operates both as municipal enterprises, so all of the town's recreation services have to be self-supported from user fees. Together, the Recreation Department's programs and the ice rink generate approximately \$1.1 million per year in revenue. The Arlington Parks Alliance umbrella group, individual friends groups, and numerous youth leagues help with routine maintenance and special projects, but the DPW is responsible for most of the maintenance of public recreation facilities – both indoor and outdoor.

Arlington's variety of opportunities for active recreation include Town-owned softball and baseball fields, football fields, multi-use fields for soccer, lacrosse, and other sports, public beach, basketball, bocce and tennis courts, and playgrounds. In these facilities, the Recreation Department sponsors seasonal offerings of sports, fitness, skating, and other programs for residents of all ages. The Recreation Department also manages twenty-eight parks, playground and buildings throughout the Town including the following major facilities:

Position	Recreation	Ed Burns Arena
Managerial	0.5	0.5
Clerical	0.6	0.6
Professional/Technical	1.0	1.0
Custodial	0.0	1.0
Total	2.1	3.1
Source: Town of Arlington, FY 2014 Budget		

- **Summer Street Sports Complex.** This major multi-sport complex includes the Ed Burns Arena and all the surrounding baseball, softball, youth baseball, field hockey and soccer fields that are used by local sports organizations. It also includes a multigenerational recreation area with fitness station, tot play equipment, bocce court, basketball court, and a handicapped accessible children's play structure.
- **Ed Burns Arena.** The state-owned Ed Burns Arena is the Recreation Department's headquarters. It is leased by the Town under an agreement with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and maintained by the DPW. Built in 1971, the facility originally offered a seasonal regulation-size skating rink. The Ed Burns Arena is now a year-round, multi-sport facility with an ice rink that operates during the fall and winter, and batting cages, indoor soccer programs, and summer camps in the spring and summer. It is used for a variety of special events and serves as home facility for the Arlington Hockey and Figure Skating Association and Arlington High and Arlington Catholic High School boys and girls hockey teams. Table 9.13 tracks annual usage statistics for the skating rink for the past five years. Public skating as an activity for both adults and children has grown significantly over the past several years, and the department offers a variety of instructional programs and special skating events. Skate rentals, sharpening, and concessions are also offered.
- **Robbins Farm Park.** The historic Robbins Farm was owned and farmed by the Robbins Family for more than three generations. In 1941, the Town acquired the land for a public park. Residents use the Robbins Farm fields and playground year-round for active and passive recreation and special community events. The site includes a large playground with unique hillside slides and a picnic area, baseball and soccer fields, a community garden, and a hillside used for sledding in the winter. In partnership with the Friends of Robbins Farm Park, the Park and Recreation Commission prepared a master plan for Robbins Farm Park in the early 2000s.
- **Menotomy Rocks Park.** Another historic recreation site located close to the town center, this park was once known as Devil's Den. It consists of 35.5 acres of rocky woodland, walking paths/cross-country running trails, two informal playing fields, a picnic area, playground and a three-acre pond. Special events,



including the Spooky Walk and Arlington's first "art in the park" event, are coordinated with the Friends of Menotomy Rocks Park and other community groups.

- **McClennen Park.** A former landfill in the northwest corner of town, this park now has two multi-purpose fields, a youth baseball field, skate boarding elements, walking trail, picnic area, playground and a naturalized area with a pond in back.
- **Spy Pond Park.** Located on Spy Pond's north shoreline, this public park includes a playground, a public boat ramp, benches, rain garden, and picnic tables. In 1999, the town commissioned a feasibility study for the park and shoreline. The plan recommended park improvements, environmental remediation, and site improvements to prevent soil erosion, improve drainage, remove invasive plant species, and deter geese, which were completed in 2005. Much of the work was completed by a Town-funded capital project, but continuing maintenance remains an ongoing concern. The Town's Vision 2020 Spy Pond Task Group and the Friends of Spy Pond Park participate in stewardship and planning efforts at the pond. In addition to passive recreation in the park, team rowing and boating are popular on the pond.
- **Reservoir Beach.** Located on Lowell Street in Arlington Heights, Reservoir Beach includes a filtered/chlorinated swimming area, bathhouse, and playground. The beach is supervised by certified lifeguards and other beach staff when open. Boston.com recently listed Reservoir Beach as one of the state's top ten swimming holes.¹⁹ In the off-season, the area is used

¹⁹ Boston.com, "Massachusetts Swimming Holes". <http://www.boston.com/travel/explorene/massachusetts/galleries/swimming_holes?pg=6>

Table 9.13. Participation Statistics: Ed Burns Arena

	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	% Change
Ice Rental Hours	1,913	2,086	1,859	1,944	1,962	2.6%
Rec & Public Skate Hours	496	552	500	610	622	25.4%
Public Skate #'s-Adult	3,597	3824	3,979	4,484	4,258	18.4%
Public Skate Passes #'s-Adult	46	55	58	53	53	15.2%
Public Skate #'s-Child/Seniors	8,356	8597	7,846	8,317	8,411	0.7%
Public Skate Passes #'s-Child/Seniors	85	92	98	127	79	-7.1%
Skate Rentals	2,713	2597	2,762	3,235	2,959	9.1%
Skate Sharpening	932	962	982	1,112	848	-9.0%
Skate Sharpening Passes	N/A	11	20	15	9	N/A
Stick and Puck	280	452	557	518	657	134.6%

Source: Arlington Recreation Department, August 2013. Note: the skating rink is actually owned by the Commonwealth and managed by the Arlington Recreation Department.

for walking, jogging, and Arlington High School cross-country meets.

- **Hurd/Reservoir Fields.** Located near Mill Brook and the Reservoir, Hurd Fields offer two softball/youth baseball diamonds and a multi-use field. The Town received a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grant for a Porous Pavement Education Project at Hurd Field, which funded the installation of a new porous parking surface at the field. A rain garden was also installed in 2013 with support from the Town and the Mystic River Watershed Association.
- **Thorndike Field.** Located in southeast Arlington close to Route 2 and the Alewife MBTA station in Cambridge, multiple multi-purpose fields are used for soccer and lacrosse. The area also has community gardens, a basketball court, a dedicated off-leash dog recreation area (OLRA), and access to the Minuteman Bikeway. The Town's first porous pavement parking area project was completed by the Park and Recreation Commission at Thorndike Field.

Many traditional organized team sports for youth and adult participants popular in Arlington. Leagues exist for soccer, baseball, softball, football, basketball, and lacrosse. The fees collected from participants of these leagues help to defray some of the maintenance costs of the facilities. There is also great interest in other competitive sports, such as tennis, crew/rowing, cross-country, archery, volleyball, fencing, gymnastics and golf. As interests in the community evolve, this has put a strain on recreation resources, and field capacity and maintenance needs. Arlington is also seeing growth in picnic/special event permit requests at parks such as Menotomy Rocks, Robbins Farm, McClen-

nen, Spy Pond, and Parallel Park. Furthermore, there has been increased use of Arlington's off-leash dog recreation area at Thorndike Field, and a growing desire among residents for additional such areas.

In addition to sports, leisure, and fitness programming for all ages, the Recreation Department has opened an after-school program for children in grades K-5. Arlington Kid Care, a state-licensed childcare program, operates at the Town-owned Gibbs School and serves all of the Town's elementary schools, as well as St. Agnes, a local parochial school.

Arlington has made a substantial investment in developing and maintaining recreation facilities. Between 2003 and 2013, many playing fields, courts, and playgrounds were updated with new surfaces, equipment, lights, and irrigation systems. The Town completed a \$2 million improvements project at the ice rink and upgraded several playgrounds. The Park and Recreation Commission's long-term capital plan anticipates many more improvements, including a new bath house at Reservoir Beach, field and diamond repairs at Hurd Field and Poets Corner, field and court renovations at Robbins Farm, Scannell Field, and Spy Pond, and new play structures at several town playgrounds. A study is being conducted to determine the maintenance and improvements needed to bring all recreation properties under the jurisdiction of the Park and Recreation Commission to current ADA standards.

All of Arlington's recreation facilities are well used and highly valued by local residents. Table 9.14 reports summary-level program participation statistics for Recreation Department seasonal programs for the past five years and details activity at the Reservoir Beach.

All of the recreational facilities under the Parks and Recreation Commission are shown in Table 9.15.

Other Recreation Facilities. The gymnasium at the former Gibbs School is a Town-owned indoor recreation resource used by the Recreation Department and many different organizations. It is also available to the public for rental.

The **Minuteman Bikeway** provides recreational opportunities, and it also functions as a habitat corridor due to its proximity to open space, brooks, and water bodies. The path connects the wildlife habitat of Arlington's Great Meadows in Lexington to the natural environment of Spy Pond. The Minuteman Bikeway was constructed on the former Boston and Maine Railroad right of way in 1992 after 20 years of planning and construction. The entire path is almost 11 miles long, beginning in Bedford Center, passing through Lexington and Arlington, and terminating in Cambridge near the Alewife MBTA Station. In addition to its popularity as a commuter bike route, the bikeway links historic sites, attractions, conservation areas, and parks in Arlington, Lexington, and Bedford. Arlington's portion of the bikeway is about three miles long and runs largely parallel to Massachusetts Avenue. In 2000, Arlington renamed its portion of the bikeway as the "Donald R. Marquis/Minuteman Bikeway" to honor a former town manager. DPW has planned and will construct a new crossing arrangement for

the bikeway at this junction with Massachusetts Avenue in Arlington Center, with completion expected in 2015.

The **Arlington Boys' and Girls' Club** is an important private, non-profit recreation facility, located next to Spy Pond, is an important resource for children and teenagers. It has the only indoor swimming pool in town for classes and open swim times, and is home for the high school swim team. The club offers a large variety of classes and special events, including pre-school, after-school, and summer programs, and boating on Spy Pond. **Fidelity House** in Arlington Center is another private nonprofit community center that offers a wide variety of programs for children. Arlington also hosts privately owned health clubs, fitness centers, and yoga studios that offer a variety of facilities and programs, primarily for adults.

Other open space and recreation-oriented resources and facilities in town are also important, but they are either private, such as the Arlington Catholic High School field and Belmont and Winchester country clubs, or state-owned, such as the Alewife Brook Greenway Path and the Mystic River and Lakes.

Arlington Public Schools

In the 2012-2013 school year, total K-12 enrollment in the Arlington Public Schools exceeded 4,900 students. Approximately half of these students are in the elementary

Table 9.14. Participation Statistics: Arlington Recreation Department Programs, 2008-2012

	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
Program Participants by Season					
Summer	1,464	1,349	1,634	1,832	1,823
Fall	913	1,057	920	1,110	1,263
Winter	764	905	1,506	1,207	2,012
Spring	544	732	812	772	786
Reservoir Beach Tags Sold					
Adult Resident	464	352	455	437	437
Child Resident	461	346	443	395	395
Senior Citizen	67	51	70	71	71
Non-Resident	31	13	13	24	24
Resident Family	358	290	379	340	340
Non Resident Family	46	17	34	27	27
Resident Family Plus 1	90	59	70	64	64
Non-Resident Family Plus 1	8	1	3	6	6
Total	1,525	1,129	1,467	1,364	1,364
Reservoir Beach Passes Sold					
Weekday Pass	3,500	3,051	4,254	3,050	3,344
Weekend Pass	1,191	1,431	1,827	1,667	2,386
Total	4,691	4,482	6,081	4,717	5,730

Source: Arlington Recreation Department, August 2013.

schools. Enrollment has grown steadily for the past twenty years and is expected to continue to increase over the next five years (see Appendix E).

In addition to providing its own public schools, Arlington belongs to the Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical School District. Located in Lexington, Minuteman Regional High School serves sixteen towns and more than 700 students, including 125 high school students and 14

Site Name	Location/Description	Acres
Bishop Field	Located at Bishop School, 25 Columbia Rd. Park has a softball/youth baseball field, open field area used for soccer, hardtop basketball area, and a playground. Parking available.	5.7
Bracket School (APS)	66 Eastern Ave. Area has a playground and a hardtop basketball area . On-street parking available.	3.1
Buck Field	422 Summer St. Field is located on the right of Ed Burns Arena (Rink). Park has a softball/youth baseball field, access to Minuteman Bikeway. Parking available.	
Buzzell Field	29 Summer St. Area has two youth baseball/softball fields, a playground, picnic tables, a basketball court, access to Minuteman Bikeway. On-street parking available.	3.6
Crosby School/Tennis Courts	Winter St. Area has a medium size green space used for soccer, tennis courts and a playground. Limited parking available.	3.8
Cutter School Reinhart Park	Located between Robbins Road and School St. Area has a playground.	0.5
Ed Burns Arena/Veterans Memorial Rink	422 Summer St. An indoor ice facility, regulation-size rink, spectator seating for 1,085 people, complete snack bar and vending machines, skate rentals and sharpening. Open, with ice, September-April. Parking available.	2.4
Florence Park	185 Florence Ave. Area has a youth baseball/softball field, a large open green space for soccer/lacrosse, a playground, small spray park, a small basketball area. On-street parking available.	5.3
Gibbs Gym	41 Foster St. Area has two playgrounds available to the public (after 6 pm weekdays) and a basketball court. Indoor gymnasium space used for Recreation Department programs. Parking available.	
Arlington's Great Meadows	Area is owned by the Town of Arlington, located in Lexington; it is located between two schools, the Waldorf School of Lexington and Lexington Christian Academy. Area has walking trails.	183.3
Hibbert Playground	Hibbert St. Area has a small playground and green space. On-street parking.	0.5
Hill's Hill	422 Summer St., at the Arlington Sports Center. Open field for various sports or activities. Has a playground with access to Minuteman Bikeway. Parking available.	
Hurd/Reservoir Fields	Located off of Drake Road. Area has two lighted softball/youth baseball fields, large open field used for soccer, access to Minuteman Bikeway, access to Arlington Reservoir and wooded walking trails. Parking available.	6.1
Locke School Playground	Davis Rd. at the Locke School condos. Area has a playground and picnic tables. On-street parking.	0.2
Lussiano/North Union Field	North Union area has playground, a basketball court, three picnic tables, one softball/youth baseball field, one baseball field, and a big open field used for soccer; seasonal spray pool area open from June-August. Parking available. School property also has two playgrounds.	5.0
Magnolia Park	Located on Herbert St./Magnolia St. Area has a playground, a basketball court, huge open field which is used for soccer and lacrosse, community gardens area; access to the Minuteman Bikeway. Very limited parking available.	3.3
McClennen Park	Locaied on Summer St. (Rte 2A). Area has playground, skate boarding ramps, walking trail, two soccer fields, one youth baseball field. Parking is available.	20.3
Menotomy Rocks Park	Main entrance: Jason St. Area has two open green spaces, a picnic area, playground, walking trails and fishing pond. On-street parking available.	35.1

Table 9.15. Arlington Parks, Fields, and Facilities: Park and Recreation Commission and Arlington Public Schools (APS)		
Site Name	Location/Description	Acres
Ottoson Middle School	630 Acton St. Area has a softball/youth baseball field and practice area; parking available.	6.0
Parallel Park	Located at the intersection of Medford St. and Mystic Valley Parkway. Playground, basketball court, and open space area.	1.2
Parmenter Park	17 Irving St. Area has a playground and a basketball court. No parking available.	1.2
Peirce School Playground	85 Park Ave. Extension. Area has a playground, a basketball court, tot playground on school property, and green space; parking available after 3 pm.	2.3
Pheasant Ave. Park/Greeley Playground	180 Mountain Ave. Area has a playground, hard surface for basketball, open green space; parking available after 3 pm.	4.1
Poet's Corner	175 Dow Ave. Area has a playground, softball/youth baseball field, basketball courts, seasonal batting cage, and tennis courts. On-street parking.	3.8
Reservior Beach	Lowell St.; seasonal beach with changing facilities, playground, year-round walking trails; large public parking lot abuts facility.	21.3
Robbins Farm Park	166 Eastern Ave. Area has a baseball diamond, large green space area used for soccer, a playground, with hillslides and cooperative garden; on-street parking available. Community events include 4th of July celebration and others sponsored by FoRFP.	11.1
Scannell Field	Linwood St. access; area has a softball/youth baseball field, access to the Minuteman Bikeway, stands to watch athletic activities. On-street parking.	15.0
Spy Pond Field	66 Pond Lane. Area has a baseball diamond, stands to watch athletic activities, large open field used for soccer, and tennis courts; on-street parking available.	
Spy Pond Park	Pond Lane access; area has a playground, boat ramp, picnic tables and access to the Minuteman Bikeway. Parking available.	
Summer St. Park	422 Summer St. Area has a playground, multigenerational area, basketball court, lighted baseball diamond, large open field used for field hockey; access to the Minuteman Bikeway; parking available.	12.7
Thorndike Field Park	99 Margaret St.; area has a large field for soccer and lacrosse, off-leash dog area, and access to the Minuteman Bikeway; limited parking is available.	10.0
Waldo Park	Located between Teal and Waldo Streets; playground, basketball court, and open space area. On-street parking.	1.0
W. A. Peirce Turf Field (APS)	869 Mass. Ave.; a lighted turf field with seating and a concession stand, six-lane track, one baseball field, one softball/youth baseball field, one multi-purpose practice field, and two basketball courts.	20.8
Wellington Park	Grove St. Lighted tennis courts, adventure course, and open space area. On-street parking.	3.0
Whittemore Robbins House	700 Mass. Ave.; area has a playground an a small green space; limited parking available.	
Source: Arlington Department of Planning and Community Development.		

post-graduate students from Arlington in 2012. Minute-man Regional is in the Massachusetts School Building Authority's (MSBA) Vocational School Repair and Renew pipeline for renovations and an addition.

The Arlington Public Schools operates nine school facilities: seven elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school (Table 9.16). Menotomy Preschool is a nonprofit preschool located in Arlington High School and run by the childhood special education department at AHS, offering work-related training experience for high school students studying early childhood education. The elementary schools serve grades kindergarten through five. A redistricting plan for elementary schools went into effect for the 2013-2014 school year in an effort to address enrollment imbalances.

The School Department has identified a need for a long-term capital maintenance plan and expanded technology in all schools. Arlington is near the end of a multi-year process of renovating or replacing all seven elementary schools. To date, six of these schools have been completed. The most recent project involved the Thompson School, at \$20 million. The new building opened in September 2013. The Stratton School is next. In December 2013, the School Department obtained a "green" capital needs assessment and replacement reserve analysis of the Stratton School and established a school building committee. The committee has begun the process of determining what needs to be done to bring the Stratton to parity with the other elementary schools. According to the School Department, the goal is to generate estimated

School	Description
Bishop Elementary 25 Columbia Road	Grades: kindergarten to 5 51,367 sq. ft., built in 1950; renovated in 2002 Softball/youth baseball diamond, basketball court, multipurpose field, playground, parking lot
Brackett Elementary 66 Eastern Avenue	Grades: kindergarten to 5 57,670 sq. ft., originally built in 1930; rebuilt in 2000 Basketball court*, multipurpose field*, playground*, across street from Robbins Farm Park (baseball diamond, multipurpose field, playground)
Dallin Elementary 185 Florence Avenue	Grades: kindergarten to 5 63,578 sq. ft., originally built in 1956; rebuilt in 2005 Softball/youth baseball diamond, basketball courts*, multipurpose field, playground, tot lot*
Hardy Elementary 52 Lake Street	Grades: kindergarten to 5 55,107 sq. ft., built in 1926; renovated in 2001 Basketball courts*, playground*, parking lot* available after 3pm
Peirce Elementary 85 Park Avenue Extension	Grades: kindergarten to 5 55,107 sq. ft., originally built in 1926; rebuilt in 2004 Basketball courts, playground, tot lot*, parking lot* available after 3pm
Stratton Elementary 180 Mountain Avenue	Grades: kindergarten to 5 63,300 sq. ft., built in 1962; renovated in 1968, 2011, basketball courts*, multipurpose field, playground, parking lot* available after 3pm
Thompson Elementary 60 North Union Street	Grades: kindergarten to 5 59,000 sq. ft., originally built in 1956; rebuilt in 2013 Basketball court*, softball/youth baseball diamond*, playgrounds*, baseball diamond*, multipurpose field*, picnic tables*, seasonal spray pool, parking lot
Ottoson Middle School 63 Acton Street	Grades: 6-8 154,380 sq. ft., built in 1920; renovated in 1998 Softball/youth baseball diamond*, practice area*, parking*
Arlington High School 869 Massachusetts Avenue	Grades: 9-12 394,106 sq. ft., built 1914; addition 1964 and renovated in 1980 synthetic field*, track*, basketball courts*, baseball diamond*, softball/ diamond*, multipurpose field*
Source: Arlington Capital Planning Committee, Report to Town Meeting, April 2013; Arlington Recreation Department; * - items with asterisk are under authority of the School Department.	

budgets to submit to the next Capital Budget cycle in September, for funding in FY2016.

The Ottoson Middle School is space-constrained and needs renovations. In 2014 the School Department filed a Statement of Interest with the Massachusetts School Building Authority to rebuild Arlington High School.

Town Buildings/ Preventive Maintenance

The Town of Arlington owns nearly fifty buildings. In addition to those most recognizable to the general public – Town Hall, the libraries, the schools, community safety, and public works – the Arlington Redevelopment Board manages several decommissioned facilities and leases the space to tenants, primarily local nonprofits such as the Cyrus Dallin Art Museum, Arlington Chamber of Commerce, Arlington Center for the Arts, and Arlington Community Media Inc., the local cable access station. An inventory prepared by the Capital Planning Committee (CPC) has been reproduced in the Appendix F.

In the past, Arlington had no town-wide policy for a coordinated approach to preventative maintenance of town facilities. Departmental coordination was lacking, and the town had multiple maintenance service contracts with vendors. To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of preventative maintenance, Arlington has created a Facilities Maintenance Planning Committee. Led by the assistant town manager, this committee is in its infancy in 2013, but it is working to develop a comprehensive preventative maintenance plan for all Town-owned public facilities.²⁰

UNIVERSAL ACCESS

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Town is required to make all of its programs and buildings accessible to people with disabilities. The Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB) provides State guidelines for accessibility for new construction and renovations. The Town prepared an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Self Evaluation and Transition Plan in 1992. According to Town staff, Arlington has brought many, though not all, of its buildings into compliance since 1992. The Massachusetts Office on Disabilities (MOD) has recognized Arlington for its efforts. The Town Hall, the Robbins Library, six of seven elementary schools, and the Ottoson Middle School reportedly comply with MAAB regulations. The Town has allocated CDBG funds for the past twelve years to install



Wheel Chair Ramps. The Town is planning to update its Accessibility Self-Evaluation in 2015, to be followed by an updated ADA Transition Plan.

In 2013-14, the Park and Recreation Commission, working with the Institute for Human Centered Design, undertook a survey of their programs and locations with the following goals: Provide an evaluation of services and programs to determine compliance with ADA guidelines; provide an evaluation of facilities, prepare a transition plan that complies with ADA standards; establish a grievance procedure and notice form that complies with ADA requirements; and provide the Town with a cost estimate for work required as a result of the evaluations; this work will be ongoing for many years.

ENERGY

Arlington became a state-designated “Green Community” in 2010.²¹ The Town has a part-time energy manager whose time is divided between Arlington and Bedford. The energy manager’s duties include administering energy programs and policies, managing and applying for grants, implementing sustainability projects, and monitoring energy consumption in municipal facilities. Since 2010, Arlington has used Green Communities funds to install energy conservation measures at several Town-owned buildings. The improvements included new, high efficiency boilers; variable speed drives (which save energy by adjusting the output of

²⁰ Andrew Flanagan, Deputy Town Manager, interview, October 9, 2013.

²¹ “Green Communities” is a program of the Mass. Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA). It provides funding to eligible cities and towns for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. To qualify for designation, a community must institute certain energy policies and provide streamlined zoning and other regulations for renewable energy development.

mechanical equipment in response to the amount of power required); energy management systems; steam traps; and motion light sensors. Arlington has also converted all of its streetlights to LED lights (see Appendix G). Through these efforts, the Town has reduced its energy consumption by 22 percent since 2008. Potential future projects include installing occupancy sensors and updating light fixtures at DPW facilities and Robbins Library; and installing anti-idling devices in DPW cars and trucks to lower carbon emissions.

Town Finances

When asked to identify and rank Arlington's current weaknesses and the conditions that threaten its future, participants at three public meetings for this master plan spoke almost in unison: lack of commercial and industrial tax base, and Arlington's increasing dependence on residential taxpayers to fund the cost of local government. Most of the sixty-two residents who attended individual and small-group interviews made similar comments. Some characterized Arlington's dilemma with words heard at all levels of government in the U.S. today: "structural deficit." In fact, residential property values have driven Arlington's tax base for many years. Since the mid-1980s, the tax base has gradually changed from 90 percent residential to almost 94 percent in 2013. In the intervening years (1986-2013), a combination of very little new growth, state aid fluctuations, three recessions, substantial increases in the cost of employee benefits such as pensions and health insurance and changes in school spending requirements have also contributed to making it hard for built-out suburbs like Arlington to maintain current service levels.

Arlington tracks financial indicators for thirteen comparison towns (Table 9.17): communities with similar populations, wealth, land area, road miles, budgets, and so forth. While Arlington relies more on residential property taxes than most towns in the comparison group, its tax burden is relatively low. Arlington's average tax bill rose at a faster rate than the state median for the past two years, presumably due to a Proposition 2 ½ override vote in 2011. However, even with accelerated tax bill growth, Arlington's tax levy per capita remained comfortably below the midpoint of its comparison area, and its average tax bill as a percentage of median household income is low for the comparison area, too. Arlington also spends less per capita than similar towns. The available demographic, revenue, and expenditure data for Arlington suggest that lack of revenue growth, not excessive spending, lies at the root of what residents call the Town's structural deficit. As the Town's FY

2014 Financial Plan suggests, Arlington is left "with only two choices: significant budget cuts resulting in service reductions or Proposition 2 ½ general overrides."²²

"Structural Deficit"

a structural deficit occurs when annual increases in fixed costs exceed the annual increase in revenue.

To preserve basic services and manage the rate of spending growth, Arlington approved an override of Proposition 2 ½ in 2011 with the understanding that the new revenues would maintain acceptable levels of service through FY 2014. Town leaders made several commitments for making the money last at least three years, and so far all of those commitments have been met. Recent changes in state law made it easier for Arlington and other communities to reduce expenditures for employee health insurance, and this has helped to stretch the benefits of the 2011 general override.²³

Issues and Opportunities

Arlington Public Schools

K-12 Enrollments. Few trends attest to the demographic changes in Arlington more persuasively than what has happened with K-12 enrollments. When work began on this master plan, the school department's enrollment projections anticipated a fairly stable pattern. By the time the master plan was in development, however, a new enrollment forecast called for steady growth in Arlington's school-age population. The good news for Arlington is that families want to live in the community. The down side is that Arlington will find it even more challenging to meet capital and operating needs on the municipal side of town government if school enrollments increase as currently predicted.

Capital Improvements. While the Stratton School is next in line for capital improvements, the timing is complicated because Arlington High School – last upgraded more than 30 years ago – has major capital needs as well. Building conditions at Arlington High School led to a recent accreditation warning from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). A needs assessment is being conducted to help the School Department plan for

²² FY 2014 Budget and Financial Plan, 15.

²³ Ibid, 3-4. See also, Finance Committee Report to 2013 Annual Town Meeting, 4.

Community	Census 2010 Population	Population Density Sq. Mi.	2010 Dept. of Revenue (DOR) Income Per Capita	2012 EQV Per Capita	2011 Expenditures Per Capita	2013 Levy Per Capita
ARLINGTON	42,844	8,271	\$43,414	\$175,702	\$2,029	\$2,288
Belmont	24,729	5,307	\$65,808	\$226,958	\$2,678	\$2,914
Brookline	58,732	8,650	\$58,434	\$276,924	\$2,976	\$2,897
Medford	56,173	6,901	\$29,198	\$126,373	\$1,815	\$1,601
Melrose	26,983	5,753	\$37,402	\$138,817	\$2,435	\$1,779
Milton	27,003	2,071	\$51,918	\$169,647	\$2,372	\$2,406
Natick	33,006	2,189	\$46,091	\$199,265	\$2,891	\$2,706
Needham	28,886	2,291	\$80,902	\$281,849	\$3,533	\$3,477
North Andover	28,352	1,064	\$47,602	\$156,821	\$2,293	\$2,167
Reading	24,747	2,492	\$42,071	\$159,675	\$2,857	\$2,226
Stoneham	21,437	3,486	\$34,028	\$145,507	\$2,442	\$1,907
Watertown	31,915	7,765	\$35,554	\$169,115	\$2,801	\$2,456
Winchester	21,374	3,539	\$87,306	\$269,213	\$3,739	\$3,243

Sources: FY 2014 Budget and Financial Plan; Mass. Department of Revenue, Municipal Data Bank.

renovation or reconstruction of this facility in the next five years. The School Department filed a Statement of Interest with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) in April 2014. A Statement of Interest is the first step in a long process of being partially (if not substantially) funded by the state. The timing of the project is uncertain due to significant competition statewide for limited building funds. It is very unlikely that Arlington could afford to rebuild the High School without state funding. If Arlington High School is selected to proceed by the MSBA, the School Committee will have to approach Town Meeting for funding to conduct a feasibility study. Moving beyond the feasibility study stage to design and construction funding will require a Proposition 2 1/2 debt exclusion vote.

Arlington also faces the challenging of competing demands between school and municipal facilities. For example, the town has identified needs for a community center and a new senior center. Some town properties also involve overlapping jurisdiction, e.g., both the Park and Recreation Commission and the School Department oversee outdoor recreation facilities associated with the schools. To better understand the town's long-term building needs and the status of existing plant, Arlington formed a Building Facilities Committee in 2013.

Department of Public Works

Aside from a 29 percent decrease in DPW employees between 2003 and 2013 (measured in FTE),²⁴ the DPW oper-



ates with some constraints that are unique to a built-out community. For example, Arlington has no designated storage areas for snow and tree removal, thus the DPW has to work with the owners of vacant or underused sites such as parking lots in order to find places to dump snow (or trees) during or after a storm. According to the DPW director, the Town has had to move snow to some of the public parks in past years; doing so, however, runs the risk of costly damage to these facilities. A regional solution may be explored, though concerns about contamination and the added problem of longer operational run times makes an out-of-town snow disposal site difficult.

A second challenge for both the DPW and the Cemetery Commission, is that Arlington is running out of cemetery

²⁴ FY 2014 Budget and Financial Plan, 58.

space. The Mount Pleasant Cemetery is the only public cemetery facility in Arlington that still has room for additional burials, but its estimated capacity is only about another five years.

Arlington residents clearly value the tree canopy that defines most neighborhood streets. The abundance of mature trees found throughout Arlington has an indelible impact on the town's visual character and environmental quality. Arlington has approximately 19,000 public trees, all under the responsibility of the DPW Natural Resources Division. Due to the number of severe storm events that occurred in 2012 – the July “microburst” and Tropical Storm Sandy in October – coupled with staff shortages, the DPW has a current backlog of about 400 tree repair/removal requests, or roughly one year of catch-up work. The Natural Resources Division also maintains thirty parks, twenty-six playgrounds, nineteen athletic fields, several parcels of open space, and twenty-one traffic islands.²⁵

Private ways present additional public works challenges in Arlington. The Town has approximately twenty-three lane miles of private ways. Mainly for public safety reasons, Arlington plows all roads and provides curbside trash pickup on private as well as public roads. However, regular road maintenance is limited to public streets under the Town's jurisdiction. According to the DPW, the private ways serving many houses on small lots are in relatively good condition, but the short private ways in lower-density parts of town need work. The DPW estimates that approximately one-third of the private ways in Arlington are in serious disrepair posing a hazard for pedestrians and vehicular access to abutting properties.

Recommendations

1. **Perform a space needs analysis for all Town-owned buildings.** The Town of Arlington owns and occupies many municipal and school buildings across town. A quantitative and qualitative analysis of all these facilities is needed to prevent the under- or over-utilization of space and misappropriation of resources between departments. This analysis should also identify potential need for space for current or projected uses, and inefficiencies that might affect the operations of a department. In addition to looking at the physical layout of space, an assessment of the environmental quality, such as daylight and the availability of
- fresh air, and the adequacy of grounds that support municipal and school facilities, should be considered.
2. **Establish a regular process for evaluating the continued need to retain Town-owned properties and for disposing of properties that no longer serve public purposes.** As part of its asset management responsibilities, Arlington should create a procedure to evaluate Town-owned properties as potential candidates for disposition, and policies to guide how proceeds from the sale of Town property will be used.
3. **Establish a Planned Preventive Maintenance (PPM) program to improve maintenance of Town facilities and structures.** Arlington should create a PPM for all Town-owned facilities, including schools, recreational facilities, parks and open space. **The Town should fund a Facilities Manager position; transfer the maintenance budget and building maintenance personnel from the School Department to the Facilities Manager.** This would benefit Arlington by having a centralized, professional expert overseeing all aspects of facilities management: i.e. routine inspection, needs assessment, routine maintenance, repairs and improvement projects, accessibility improvements, energy improvements, budgeting, and planning. The Facilities Manager should also maintain an inventory of the tenants in each facility, both public and private.
4. **Assess the condition of private ways.** Work with residents to improve the condition of private ways. The Town of Arlington operates trash and snow removal service on private ways, as a preventative measure for public safety. However, property owners are responsible for maintenance of over twenty-three lane miles of private ways in Arlington. Many of these roads are in deteriorated condition, and continue to fall further into disrepair.
5. **Study and develop a plan for addressing Arlington's long-term public works related needs, including cemetery and snow storage needs.**
6. **Establish a sidewalk pavement inventory and a plan designating criteria for pavement types that will be employed for future replacement.** Pavement types include concrete, asphalt, or brick.

²⁵ Public Works Department, 2012 Annual Report.

7. Seek Town acquisition of the Ed Burns Arena from the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation.
8. Prepare a feasibility study for an updated Community Center/Senior Center.